

ABSTRACT

A calling party announcement apparatus that provides the identity of the caller in synthesized human speech. The invention captures the Incoming Caller Line Identification (ICLID) signal sent by the telephone company. The invention announces the calling party's identity to the called party through a built-in speaker and over the telephone receiver. The called party can elect to accept or reject the call before the telephone company central office has connected the two parties together. The invention makes it possible to screen incoming telephone calls without the aid of a special Caller ID telephone set or auxiliary Caller ID display terminal. The invention is installed in the customer premises, such as a residence or office, between the telephone line demarcation point and the telephone sets. The invention is compatible with any standard telephone set and subscriber trunks provisioned with the Caller ID enhanced customer feature. One of the most important features of the invention is its ability to deliver a vocalized announcement of the caller's identity over a standard telephone set's receiver without the call having actually been declared answered by the telephone company, and without the caller having been cut through. The call is not considered "answered" nor is it billed by the telephone company unless the called party or a telephone answering device, such as an answering machine, accepts the call.